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*Night with the Yankees*

A LECTURE

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BY /

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## A NIGHT WITH THE YANKEES.

YOU have been invited here to spend an evening with the Yankees, and I have undertaken to bring these Yankees to meet you. Did not the limits of the time which an evening lecture can occupy, and the knowledge which an eight weeks' residence in a country many thousand miles in extent, and containing thirty-four millions of inhabitants, can afford, make it evident that I can only give you a small part of a *very* great and *very* complex whole, I might feel that I have been somewhat presumptuous in this enterprise.

But my aim will not be to give you a judgment of the American people as a whole ; for the simple reason, that I have not formed such a judgment. I will endeavour to confine myself strictly to stating things I actually saw, and giving such estimates as I can of what came within the range of my own experience, or learnt at first hand from what seemed

to me trustworthy authority. The craving which seems to haunt so many persons, both readers and writers, for complete rounded judgments of men and classes and nations, seems to me one of the most unhealthy in its nature, and injurious in its consequences, that can infect the mind and narrow the heart of man.

When you think seriously of the matter, can you help perceiving that it is next to impossible for a man passing through, or residing temporarily in, a country with a large and varied population such as exists in America, to acquire more than a partial view of it, its people, its social, or even political, institutions. He sees in a necessarily superficial way the people who are living in his hotel, or a few private families to whom he may have had introductions. There are thousands of other families, all of them different in character, varying in intelligence, in moral tone, in culture, of whom he sees nothing. Even those whom he does see, he sees only in one or two aspects. If he is a politician—say “Our own Correspondent” for some party newspaper—he is naturally thrown most among those whose opinions he most sympathises with. Unless he is of superhuman virtue he can hardly but be biased more or less by his own opinions, and the opinions of those he associates with. A man’s own personal tastes, and habits too, will have much to do with the class of persons he sees, and even with what is

exhibited to him in any class he comes across. A man who is used to *fast* or fashionable society at home, and who enjoys such society, will probably find it in abundance in the large towns of most civilized countries. Another, who by some process has educated himself into an outrageously exaggerated view of the extent and importance of certain abnormal domestic relations, will see hardly anything else, and will present a picture of society with the confidence of a master and the air of a philosopher that will make the whole People he pretends to depict stare in astonished indignation, or laugh in contemptuous scorn. But a man who goes to a new country with reasonable diffidence and open-mindedness, resolved to the best of his ability to see the reality of things in this new and unknown society, will find it by no means easy, and will be by no means anxious to form, or to give utterance to, large and sweeping judgments.

How hard a task, indeed, it is to acquire a really full and well-proportioned knowledge even of the country in which one has been born and bred, and lived all one's days—at least, how hard it is for ordinary human beings. Those wonderful intelligences—one dare not call them men or women; their insight must belong to higher or lower spheres than common humanity can command—who condescend, in weekly journals, to delight and instruct us concerning the innermost moods of "The Girl of

the Period," or "The Mother," or "The School-boy," or the "Working Man," with such unerring vision and such final judgment, lie quite out of the ken of ordinary men and women. But let any of us who have no claims to any such astonishing omniscience, ask ourselves what we really know of our own country as a whole. Think what large classes in England we know only from hearsay reports, paragraphs in the newspapers, often biased by political or social prejudices, prejudices honest enough perhaps, and not wilfully or unkindly entertained. What does Belgravia know of Whitechapel? what does a studious literary or scientific man, as a rule, know of the commercial or of the labouring classes? Nay, what does any man really *know* of his next door neighbour. How easy it is for one to live in a town or in a neighbourhood, and at the end of ten or even twenty years discover some large and important class of persons, or class of moral action, good or evil, of which he knew nothing before.

When the prophet Elijah came to Horeb, the mount of God, with the terrible conviction on his mind that he only was left of the true worshippers of Jehovah in Israel, the still small voice that came to him in the cave, after the wind and the earthquake and the fire, made known to him for the first time that there were in Israel seven thousand that had not bowed the knee to Baal. When will

that still small voice, ringing down eighteen Christian centuries, reach Christian hearts and guide Christian feeling and thought and action, bringing home to them the lesson, "Judge not that ye be not judged."

But even on a much lower level than is given to us in Horeb, or in that other and still more sacred mount, we might feel how careful we should be in forming a judgment of so vast and new and complex a country as America is. Think of the great variety of nationalities that are pouring into it their thousands and tens of thousands every year. During the twenty years beginning with 1847 and ending with 1866, over three millions six hundred thousand emigrants landed at New York. Of these Ireland furnishes a million and a half, Germany nearly as many, England and Scotland together over half a million. Besides these France, Switzerland, Sweden, Poland, and other countries furnish their quota. If we take the original settlers, who were as a rule mostly English, with an infusion of old Dutch blood, not numerically large, we will find that considerably the larger proportion undoubtedly are of our common Anglo-Saxon stock, substantially our countrymen, even if we do not admit—alas that we cannot!—that the Irish are not. Think what a complex mass this is to form a judgment of. I will not attempt myself to do so, nor ask you to do more than receive my experiences for what you find them worth. They are necessarily partial, for I only saw

part ; if they lead you to think more favourably of the Americans than you hitherto have done, I shall certainly not regret ; for I deeply agree with the sentiment I used to hear from a venerable and wise old lady when I was a boy, “You cannot do wrong to think as well as possible of every body you meet.”

I have no doubt that my experience of America was in many respects exceptionally good. Still it represents one element of society there, and I saw a considerable variety of classes and travelled over a considerable space of territory.

The first sight I had of the country was very impressive to me. The day and the night before we sighted land had been very foggy—we could not see many hundred yards before us—and the hideous fog-whistle, sounding almost incessantly to warn unseen vessels of our approach, had been ringing in our ears with a music as sweet as the voice of a disconsolate cow, and made one feel dreary to the last degree. I was on deck with a good many other passengers when we passed Sandy Hook Lighthouse, a little before four o'clock, on a still August morning. The growing day slowly revealed to us the magnificent bays, outer and inner, of New York. The shores on either hand were beautifully wooded, with gentle heights, studded with frequent houses of all sorts and sizes, villas and mansions, mostly, I was told, of New York merchants, who in

the summer live generally out of town. As we passed through the Narrows, as they call the little strait connecting the inner with the outer bay, we came into full view of New York harbour with its twin cities of New York and Brooklyn stretching up from the bay, to right and left, countless spires and lofty houses struck into vivid light by the morning sun. Large river steamers dashing up and down and across, serving the same purposes as our Thames penny boats do, but bearing about the same relation to them that a trombone does to a penny whistle. A general sense of vastness and largeness of life came over one; the sight was really very grand.

But not more striking and remarkable than this sight was the aspect of some of our American fellow-passengers as the vision of their native land came vividly before them. They glowed and kindled into exulting speech and look. A certain hard and half-defiant look, which I fancy characterizes most Americans in England, broke off them, and they became bright and benignant. One slight, active-looking young man, who had sat opposite me at the captain's table during the voyage, murmured half to himself, half to me, "This is finer than the bay of Naples after all." I was told that this gentleman had made a large fortune in dry goods—which means in America drapery—during the war, retired, married, and gone with his wife to

Europe to spend dollars and time, and gather knowledge and experience. He was returning with his wife and their little child, and a French nurse ; and, being tired of idleness, thought of taking to business again. He was only twenty-six years old. He was pleasant-mannered enough. There were two English peers at our table, whom after the first two days at sea he called familiarly by their surnames. But it did not seem offensively meant, and no offence seemed taken. He and other Yankees clustered together, talked of whom they should meet, sniffed the air of home, laughed exultingly, looked benignantly at us Britishers, as if to say "Now isn't this a great sight ; America is a great country, and we are a great people, as you will find before you leave us." It was the exulting crow and strut of the young cock at the sight of his own barn-door. It was the Yankee at home,—I think undoubtedly, as a rule, a pleasanter person than he is abroad, especially in England, where perhaps the sense that he is often disliked or undervalued is apt to give him an air of self-assertion.

Perhaps I ought to explain here that before the late war the word Yankee was a nickname, specially applied to the inhabitants of the New England States. Now, all Americans, except the South, accept and are rather proud of the name ; and, from the specimens I saw, it appears to me that they need not be ashamed of it. Our old conven-



tional Yankee, with his bowie knife, whittling everlastingly at something, speaking through his nose, asking impertinent questions of every stranger, I saw nothing of. I met of course hundreds of all classes in railway cars, steamers, and the like, but they were quite as reserved and chary of speech as the English are. When one got into conversation with them there was no rudeness, no impertinent intrusive questions. Their manners among themselves were courteous and considerate as a rule: the only roughness I saw, and it was very innocent, was among some recently arrived German emigrants. The working man seemed to me at least on a level with the best of ours, and his average intelligence is undoubtedly much above ours. No working man will lift his hat to you, or rise to give you his seat because you are better dressed than he is; but he will answer a question with civility and intelligence, and make room for you to sit beside him with perfect courtesy, as any English gentleman would. They are all proud of their country, and not unfrequently I was asked the question, "Don't you think this a great country?" I almost invariably made a point of saying, "You have great opportunities and great responsibilities;" and they did not seem to take it much amiss. But I think the feeling generally was, "We not only have a great country, but we *are* a great people, and have done great things." They undoubtedly

have a large manner with them, large ideas, large hopes, and, especially since their great war, large memories. A great country indeed America, and vast, and I think that its vastness in all ways has a most marked influence on the people themselves.

It is an old idea that the physical character of a country has a great deal to do with the moral and intellectual character of the people that inhabit it. The mountaineer has to use his limbs, and naturally gets active and alert—the man of the plain can move about more easily, and has a tendency to get loutish. Look, for instance, at a Scotch Highlander and an English peasant. The man who lives in a soft climate, affording extensive *outlook*, and fine *inlook*, gets enervated, while keen air braces the mind and body. The old Greek, with his extensive sea-board and pure atmosphere, acquired that habit of adventure into the world of sense and the world of thought which makes him a source of so much light and guidance to humanity. So America is a LARGE country, and the people get large in their ideas, in their actions, in their speech. Their humour is the humour of extravagance; their brag is merely a large way of putting things. A *big thing* was a phrase I often heard concerning mercantile transactions, and a *big thing* in any region is a joy to their hearts. And their country affords scope for the development of this mood.

But America is enormous not merely in *extent*, its *wealth* in every way is correspondingly great. Its wide stretching prairie land, at once fertile and easy of cultivation, affords to the farmer who has energy and skill a ready means of wealth. Indeed, it hardly even requires these qualities in any eminent degree, at least at first. The virgin soil in enormous tracts, unencumbered by wood or mountain or rock, needing the merest scratching of the soil before sowing the seed, enables almost any one to be a farmer. The wealth in minerals and metals is prodigious. Their lakes are seas, emptying themselves by mighty rivers into the boundless ocean ; their wide stretching primeval forests, their chains of mountains often richly wooded to the tops, the whole aspect of their country gives one, even on a cursory survey such as mine was, a sense of variety and extent and prodigality of wealth in natural resources that is very impressive. The longer I was in the country the more this sense of VASTNESS was impressed on my mind.

Accompanying this sense of largeness in the country and the mood of the people, is a certain simplicity, naturalness, *of-course-ness*, if I may be allowed to coin a word, that convinces you, as you become familiar with it, that it is in no sense put on, but is their genuine natural mood. Things that are extravagant with us are not so with them.

Perhaps the one pre-eminent natural object which every one is expected to see—I mean of course the Falls of Niagara—is in many respects symbolical of the country and its people, though not quite in the sense which Mr. Carlyle gives it. It pours down its mighty ocean of waters with such quietness and ease that it is not till after you have been some time looking at it, that its vastness is fully felt. They tell a story of an Irishman who was taken to see the Falls. His friends were somewhat taken aback at his apparent indifference in its great presence, and asked him if he did not think it wonderful. “What is to wonder at after all,” said the imperturbable Pat. “Don’t you see all that water falling down that great height?” “Well, of course it falls down, it can’t help itself; you would not expect it to fall up.” Whether any Irish, or other man ever really said this I cannot tell, but the story represents, not unfaithfully, an impression that one has on seeing it first, and indeed one that continues after you have been looking at it for a considerable time, an impression which, when you realise it, comes to be no small element in your admiration. Nothing I think struck me more than the simplicity, almost tranquillity, of the whole phenomenon. All the water-falls in Great Britain might be taken from Niagara and never missed. And yet a little Scotch or Westmoreland stream seems to make a

great deal more fuss about its little performance of flinging itself down some hundred feet than does this sea of waters rolling over the breadth of a mile down two hundred feet. No description I have ever seen prepared me for what I saw. If you were to take a mile of any sea coast, say Brighton from Regency Square to Kemptown, and imagine the land, inland, cut away and the sea pouring down the gap, you would have perhaps as good an idea as you can well get without actually seeing it. Verily, Niagara is a *big* thing. If, according to some modern prophets, it is a type of democracy, it is perhaps worth remembering that one half, and that the larger half, belongs to the British Empire.

Singularly enough, the country round the Falls is comparatively flat and common-place, which perhaps is also symbolical in its way. Much of the country is as tame as the fens of Cambridge or Lincolnshire, to which the prairie, for instance, bears no small resemblance. There is, however, plenty of fine scenery in America. The Hudson River from New York to Albany, 150 miles, is one long stretch of great and varied beauty from hill and rock and foliage and water. Finer than the Rhine, my American friends maintained.

As nature is, so is man in his operations on this great continent. The ferry-boat, for instance, which takes you from Jersey City where I landed, to New York proper is like a bit of a street. Wag-

gons and carriages, with their horses in them, drive on to the centre, and on either side are paths for foot passengers. It is a steamboat, and is steered from above like a Hansom cab. Then the STREET CARS running along tramroads, which the illustrious Mr. Train endeavoured to introduce in London—I am thankful to say without success—are gigantic omnibuses. They carry no roof passengers, as ours do, and professedly only twenty-four inside, but I have often seen fifty or sixty, of course the greater number standing. They are a great popular convenience, it is said. Being low as well as slow, people get in and out without their stopping, but they make the passage of other carriages along the streets they occupy, very troublesome. The railway cars, too, are much larger than our carriages, and are not separated into compartments, and there is only one class. They have sleeping cars for long journeys; and my first railway journey from New York to Chicago was a thousand miles, and I slept two nights on board. By paying a few dollars extra I got what they call a state-room to myself, where I was separated from the other passengers by wooden partitions, and a sliding door in front. The whole journey cost me about the same as first class from London to Edinburgh. The great extent of the country necessitates great railways, and naturally they think nothing of long journeys. One friend in Kansas and another at Nashville,

Missouri, wrote urging me to come and see them, the one saying it was *only* a three days journey and the other four. The longest I actually took was thirty-six hours, and I was contented with that.

Their cities, too, are built on a more generous scale, as regards space, than ours. I think that New York and Philadelphia stand on more ground than London, the one with a third, and the other about a fifth, of its population. The streets are broad, long, and generally quite straight ; the houses in some cases numbering over 2000. How would you feel living in No. 2001, Fifty-ninth Street ? They have plenty of very fine and various kinds of stone, and the architecture seemed to me very good. A rich brown stone, almost chocolate coloured, is very common, and white marble not uncommon. Broadway, in New York, is perhaps a typical street, and also typical of at least one phase of American character. Many of the houses and shops are very fine, were they not defaced by gigantic signboards, frequently stuck out from the walls, and even flaring flags, making known that Grandy is *the* hatter, or Dingee *the* boot-maker, of the world. The houses are solid and well built, and in good taste, but it is all marred by this self-glorification of men, who certainly were not disposed to hide their light under a bushel. May one hope that these defacements will get wiped off one day, and the solid work remain. Many of the shops, or stores as they call

them, are very large. One I saw building as a retail dry-goods store, a place where ladies buy their dresses, a gigantic Swan & Edgars, will, when completed, be about as big as Leicester Square. The proprietor of this has another almost as large devoted to wholesale business. His name is Stewart, and he is reputed to be the richest man in America. He is not a native American, but a North of Ireland Irishman, and has risen from being a porter. His private house seemed to me hardly smaller or less beautiful than any nobleman's in London.

One of the most characteristic cities in America is Chicago, on Lake Michigan. In 1840 its population was 4000, and it is said now to approach 200,000. I spent two days there. The streets are all wide and long, and the houses are, many of them, exceedingly handsome. They are built of a white limestone, easily worked when new, but hardening by exposure to the air, so that it comes to have the look of white marble. But the whole place had a raw unsettled look, the pavement dry mud on the carriage way, and planking on the foot-path. It is the great corn market for Illinois and the great lake district. But the whole place had an unsettled feeling, as if one were on a sea of mud or sand, and gave one an experience as of mental sea-sickness. Yet I met some really pleasant, cultivated men there; and this unsettledness is natural in a place which has grown so rapidly. Not many



years since it was found that the principal streets stood so little above the lake level, as not to admit of adequate drainage, and were even liable to inundations from lake overflows, and they were, by some engineering process unknown to me, raised several feet above their former level.

One of the *big things* in America, of which you have all no doubt heard, is their Hotels. As I was anxious to see one of the true American type, I went to the Fifth Avenue Hotel, which, I was told, would give me a better idea than any other in New York of what hotel life is there. They can entertain 1100 guests, the guide books tell you, and I can well believe it, from the height I was sent and the corridors I passed along on my way to a bed-room. I here first made acquaintance with the hotel clerk—a type of American gentleman that, for serene lofty demeanour is, I think, unequalled by any of the *genus homo* I ever met. I was perhaps in a somewhat subdued frame of mind when I first encountered him. I had been six hours in getting my luggage ashore and through the custom house, where the officials were at once civil and dilatory, so that I could neither get my luggage, nor vent my impatience in scolding. The day was hot, too, and I had been up since three o'clock in the morning. I was, consequently, tired and humble-minded when I passed into the grand entrance hall of the Hotel, which was filled with

men—guests I suppose—sitting on chairs, or walking about smoking cigars. A few men without hats, whom I therefore concluded to be porters or waiters, were moving about among them. I asked one of these if I could have a bed-room. He told me to apply at the office, pointing to a counter like a banker's counter, which stood at one end, with a desk in the corner, behind which stood a gentleman who was chatting to other gentlemen, who stood outside smoking cigars. I walked up to him and put my question. He gave me a calm look of recognition, and went on with his chat. I remained passive and expectant. In a minute or two he quietly and leisurely pulled out a drawer, in which was a number of small cards; he looked at me, went on between hands with his chat, looked at the cards again, selected one, and stuck it in a little frame hanging inside his desk screen; then he pushed a book to me, in which I saw a number of names written, from which I gathered I was to write mine there. Then he turned round, selected a key, which hung among hundreds of others, each beside a little pigeon hole with a number on it corresponding to a number on the key; then he turned to me, and at last he spoke: "Would you like to go to your room now?" I meekly replied that I would, whereupon he rung a little hand-bell, which brought a lad, whom he told to show me to my room, handing me the key. The whole manner of this

man had such dignified self-confidence and repose, with not a touch of what you could call rudeness, that seemed to me inimitable. But I found it at all other hotels I went to; it was the manner of the class—the repose that stamps the caste of *Vere de Vere* could not be finer. Once at Buffalo I had a slight touch of sauciness, which I was able to snub, but it was only momentary, and the man soon recovered his armour. Perhaps the excuse on that occasion was that there was a great Agricultural Show, and the man was over-worked. Once, at Chicago, on a second visit, I had the honour of shaking hands with one. Whether the fact that the bishop had called on me while I was away, and left his card, had anything to do with this unwonted condescension I cannot tell. But, on the whole, I never saw the *grand manner* in greater perfection in any class than in the class of clerks at American Hotels. Perhaps the fact that they, of all that class of human beings who minister to your domestic comfort—or discomfort as the case may be, and whom we in England call servants and they, I understand, call helps, though I never heard the word used—are native Americans may have something to do with this. All waiters and porters are either Irish or black. I ought, in fairness, to say that, according to my experience, these clerks do their work substantially well.

I cannot say that the American style of Hotel

life was to my taste. It lacked the repose needful to a mature Englishman's comfort. The dining-room at the Fifth Avenue holds, I think, two or three hundred guests. During your meal people were coming and going, and as soon as your last morsel was swallowed you were apparently expected to go too. Then their habit seems to be to bring all your dinner, from the soup to the pudding, at once, and your meats and the dabs of half-a-dozen different kinds of vegetables they bring you, were getting cold while you were getting through your fish or soup. I resisted this and on the whole successfully, but the labour was troublesome, and I afterwards betook me to the Brevoort House kept on English methods.

The great extent and the great wealth of the land, lead naturally to much more widely diffused wealth, or at least comfort, than is common in England, and has surely very important bearings on their social institutions and relations. As I have said, I would partly attribute to it that habit of what we think tall, exaggerated talk that undoubtedly characterizes generally the American people. People have room to breathe, to move about, even to brag to their heart's content. But this liberality is by no means confined to their speech. We all remember Mr. Peabody's munificence to our English poor. I found tokens everywhere that such munificence is by no means uncommon among wealthy

Yankees in their own country. And what is remarkable, I think, is that men give in their lifetime, while they are comparatively young, and still more noteworthy, that they give with the consent and co-operation of their children and heirs. To give a few instances :—

There is a very large institution in New York which combines the leading features of a Mechanic's Institute and a Working Man's College, and has besides an excellent library. This institution was founded and has been sustained by Mr. Peter Cooper. And his active and energetic ally in the work, who is also his partner in the iron trade, is his son-in-law Mr. Hewitt, whom I had the pleasure of meeting on my voyage home. Above a million dollars have been spent by Mr. Cooper on this institution. I was told that about 1000 working men and women get education in all branches of learning here, and have the best men in America lecturing to them.

A Mr. Cornell, who twenty-five years ago was a working mechanic, and who has made a large fortune by some discovery connected with the laying of telegraphic wires, has just given half a million dollars to found a university in the upper part of New York State. He is a hale, hearty man, and he and his son, a young man of some twenty-five years old, were busy in some consultation connected with it, during my stay with a

friend in Syracuse, who is elected to be its first president.

At Yale College in the beautiful town of New-haven, one of the oldest established colleges in the States, three several gentlemen had just given 50,000 dollars each for the erection of museums of science and of art, and for a new chapel; and another gentleman some hundred thousand dollars to their Art schools.

At Chicago they are building a really magnificent college, that for beauty of architecture will vie with any similar building in England, and which is of great extent. The funds for the building, and also for an ample endowment, are the bequest of Judge Douglas, who was the successful opponent of Mr. Lincoln for the Senatorship of the State of Illinois.

These are only a few of many cases that I heard of or saw during my brief visit to the States. A clergyman of New York told me that a friend of his had taken pains to make a calculation of the amount of money that he knew to have been contributed to various charitable and educational institutions since the beginning of the war, and it amounted to several millions pounds sterling.

Indeed, the habit seemed so common that it was talked of almost as a matter of course. You may judge the extent to which this goes when an American friend informs me that in Boston it is not considered *respectable* for a man to die without

leaving money to some public charities. I suppose this means that he will certainly lose caste in the next world if he does. When men make large fortunes it seems far more common than we have any knowledge, or experience of, to devote a considerable part of it to purposes of national social well-being. It was frequently said to me, "We do not think it a good thing to leave our sons very much money ; it breeds idle and luxurious habits, and young men so left seldom turn out well." There can be no doubt that our own country is not lacking in noble instances of public-spirited benevolence, but theirs seems undoubtedly greater and more active. Perhaps in these respects the need is less pressing with us owing to the many princely foundations we have inherited. Part, too, of this comparative indifference about leaving large wealth to their children may be owing to the prodigality and beneficence of nature in the land which contains wealth for countless generations. Perhaps, too, the knowledge that even the poorest man has, that it is always possible for him to acquire wealth, and especially wealth in land and houses, has a good deal to do with that independence of demeanour of which I have already spoken. Hired farms, for instance, in the corn-growing States, are quite the exception. Almost every man farms his own land. Besides this, even in large cities, like Philadelphia, a very considerable proportion of working men live

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in their own houses. A printer there, employing some hundred men, told me that one half of his men did so, and a friend drove me through long streets of substantially built houses, that would rent from £30 to £40 a year in England, that were inhabited and *owned* by working men.

Let any man consider what an element of stability for the country lies in this very fact. We use the phrase, "No stake in the country," and point, and with justice, to the danger to a country when a class in that condition gets too much power. But a country where the bulk of the people are well fed, well clothed, well housed, and not unfrequently live in their own houses, has elements of stability of no insignificant order. Demagogues may rant to their heart's content, but the elements are not there on which they can ply their baleful trade. Poverty, social degradation, want of a stake in the country—that is the fuel which kindles into fury and destruction at their fires. All old States in Europe will have to look to that disease, and if they can find a medicine for it. America at present is practically free from it. There is, no doubt, a good deal of poverty, and great degradation, in parts of New York, and in some other large towns, but that is chiefly among the Irish, who have learnt the habit of misery and improvidence elsewhere than in America.

One of the main objects I had set before myself



in going to America was to see and learn something of the collegiate and higher education going on there. I accordingly visited a good many of the institutions devoted to the higher education. The one that naturally interests a stranger most is Harvard University, in the town of Cambridge, which is a kind of suburb of Boston, the capital of Massachusetts, and the principal city of New England. Boston has a much more settled look than any other city I visited in America. Indeed, you might almost fancy yourself in England as you walk along its older streets, which are as winding and narrow as parts of London, and the houses are built of red brick, such as you see in Chelsea or Hackney. It is the great literary centre of America, and here, or in Cambridge, reside the larger number of literary men whose names are known to us in England—Mr. Longfellow, the well-known poet—Mr. Lowell, the author of the “Biglow Papers,” and also of numerous serious poems, which many good judges consider to have very high merit—Dr. Holmes, the bright and humorous author of “The Autocrat of the Breakfast-table,” of “Elsie Venner,” and of other works which give him no inconsiderable place in the World of Literature. Emerson lives at Concord, thirteen miles off, and is a frequent visitor, and, indeed, may be said to form one of the Boston set. Charles Sumner and Wendell Phillips, eminent political men,

who were great leaders in the anti-slavery movement which primarily led to the great war, also reside there.

I had the honour and pleasure of dining at a monthly dinner of the Atlantic Club, to which most of these eminent men belong. The conversation was of the bright pleasant kind that one finds in the best literary circles in England, and had a smack of the collegiate tone of Oxford or Cambridge. They cracked jokes on each other, told stories, talked of Englishmen who had dined with them—of course were anxious to know about our literary men and doings at home. Dr. Holmes indulged in quaint humorous speculations as to why Yankees had long thin narrow faces like himself and Emerson, and so on. Nothing could be more delightful, or simple, or easy. Thackeray had dined with them when he was in America; and while we were eating the oysters, which there as here are often given at the beginning of the meal, they told me that, at his first dinner, they had set some of their largest before him, and he had contemplated them through his eye-glass for a while, and then asked what he was expected to do with them. "Eat them, of course." "What, these monsters!—well, here goes." After he had swallowed one they asked him how he felt. "As if I had swallowed a baby."

"From gay to grave, from lively to severe," we

finally got on the subject of the relations between England and America. Mr. Sumner, being the principal political man present, spoke most, and I am sorry to say rather bitterly, of our temper and conduct during their great trouble. Mr. Longfellow was at the head of the table, and I was next on his left, and Mr. Sumner on his right, so that we were face to face. He said some things which I thought unjust, and told him so, and there was a little rather hot discussion across the gentle, sweet-tempered poet. But other subjects came on. Holmes kept uttering his quaint enquiries as to the origin of the lankey jaw of the New Englander. Some one suggested that they had mostly come from old Puritan stock, who never laughed, and thus their faces lengthened ; then they had bred in and in, which, according to Mr. Darwin's theory, necessarily intensified any peculiarity after a few generations ; that the remedy was to laugh and eat plenty of beef and bacon ; and so the chat went on. I don't think I ever spent a pleasanter time. After dinner Mr. Sumner came over to me, and we had a great deal more talk about the relations between our two countries, which in spite of his resentment he was most anxious to see established on the natural basis of brotherly and cordial amity. He lifted his tall handsome form and head and said several times, "England, with all thy faults I love thee still ;" and here, I think, he uttered the

feeling that is at the bottom of the best American hearts.

I stayed a week there, with my excellent friend Mr. Fields the publisher. Dr. Holmes lives next door and I saw him frequently. Such a bright, cheery, merry little man, full of sparkle and wit, but with a very fine vein of earnest speculative power underlying it all, as indeed is the case, I think, with all our best humourists of the true Anglo-Saxon type. I took a mid-day family dinner, and spent a Sunday afternoon with Mr. Longfellow; Professor Childs, well known in England among students of Chaucer and our older writers, for his valuable contributions to the science of our common language, and Professor Lowell, were also there. The whole tone of society there had a matured, cultured tone, that undoubtedly is more characteristic of England than, generally, of America. I don't think I could have noticed from their talk or intonation, nor even in spite of Holmes' chaff about lankey jaws, from their faces, that I was not in a society of English gentlemen. Longfellow wears his beard in full, so you don't see his jaws, but brow and upper face are broad in proportion to his face as any Englishman's, and so far from having anything sharp in its expression, it is sweet as an angel's or a child's. Lowell is square shouldered, square jawed, square browed, and is reserved, almost shy, in manner, at first

introduction. Emerson, with whom I had also a good deal of talk, is most like the Yankee type, but I know a good many lankier jaws in England than his, and his expression is noble and thoughtful—the face of a sage.

The Boston set, as it is called in America, were undoubtedly the root and centre of that anti-slavery and abolitionist movement which brought about the late war. They were the essence of the Northern party. They were the leaders of progress in new ideas in social and political life. They are unquestionably New America. No great idea that works through the States but has its birth-place, or at least its cradle there. Like all thoughtful men everywhere they have their eyes fixed on the great future of humanity. They are filled with that noble discontent, without which men would stagnate on the weeds of sloth, a discontent which is far removed from mean selfish discontent. A man enjoying selfish gratification, whatever its nature may be, may be discontented if he is required to bestir himself to do some act of help for others. Or he may be discontented because his power of enjoyment is lessened by being pampered. That is ignoble discontent. But a man, who, looking round on the condition of his fellow men perceives much misery, degradation, ignorance, sees squalid poverty in one class, and soul-rotting luxury in another, and is discontented therewith, has in him that

noble discontent which is the hope of the world, as much as any human emotion can be. But that feeling, thank God, is not a modern feeling merely. Since the time that Moses, with hidden face, and fear in his heart, heard the Lord say, "I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters," there have never been wanting men to whom that sight and that cry was intolerable. No laudation of the elegant, gentlemanly manners of the Southern slave owner could blind the eyes or stop the ears of men to whom the vision and the voice of God, the Redeemer, the God of liberty, had been manifest and audible.

This set of men have undoubtedly been among the foremost in all new works which seemed to them real human progress, but they have not been unmindful of the past, as indeed no such noble man is or can be. They did not forget that the tree of Liberty has roots as well as branches, and these roots they found in Old England. Hence the Boston men always were ardent lovers of England, up to the time when, as they think England rejected and spurned their love, and took up with those who had always seemed to them the enemies of both her and of them. English history, English language, and English literature were studied in the New England Colleges, in a way that they were studied nowhere else in America, as indeed

they were studied by comparatively few among ourselves.

I regret that I did not see any of the common, or Grammar Schools in Boston. But I have no doubt that the culture they afford corresponds to that given at the College. I had the great privilege of hearing a Lecture given by Mr. Emerson to an audience of about 2000 persons, apparently of all classes. The subject was "Eloquence," and was treated in Mr. Emerson's usual fine subtle manner, demanding considerable intelligence and mental attention from his hearers. Mr. Emerson had kindly given me a Platform ticket, and Mr. Wendell Phillips, with true American courtesy, made a place for me near the Lecturer. I had thus a good opportunity of watching the faces of the audience, and felt clear that it was a fit audience, though not few.

One institution, however, I did see in Boston, intended for the outcast, criminal class of their youth, that interested me very much and that would stand comparison with similar excellent institutions at home. It is a reformatory for young lads who have been convicted of crime. My excellent host brought me a message from Judge Russell, inviting me to come to Sunday morning service on board the Boston School Ship, where 150 of these lads are kept in *penal*, it is true, but also in what is meant to be and is *disciplinary*, imprisonment.

It was a beautiful still Sunday morning when the worthy judge took us on board this School Ship, which was moored some two or three hundred yards out into the harbour. Before service he took us round the hold of the vessel, which is fitted up with sleeping accommodation and school-rooms. The lads were walking about in expectation of his arrival, and all seemed very much pleased to see him. They were of various ages, from twelve to sixteen. They had almost all the rather hard look which a homeless life, or a home narrow and poor in morals and intellect, gives to young human creatures, and which one sees in our English workhouse children, as if a mother's love or a father's care had scarcely ever warmed their hearts or elevated their minds. But a gleam seemed to ray out from their faces when the Judge spoke to them, and went round from one to another, shaking hands with a good many of them. The schoolroom, which was fitted out with maps on the walls, and shelves well filled with good books, the gift of some benevolent Boston gentleman, was also the chapel. The Judge read prayers, a selection from our morning service. They sang some hymns, in the hard, workhouse voice, but heartily enough as it appeared, and then a young man—a volunteer missionary I fancy—gave them a short, earnest sermon. After another hymn the Judge addressed them for about ten minutes in words of encourage-



ment and advice, pointing his moral with this instance,—“Well, boys, do you know that General Phil. Sheridan is coming to Boston this week, and has promised to come and see you. You will like to see him?” “Yes, sir,” rang out from all the boys. “I am sure you will, and he will be glad to see you all looking hearty and anxious to improve yourselves. But I want you all to know that Phil. Sheridan was once a very poor boy, not richer than you are. And I want to tell you a story about him, which will show you the sort of way in which he rose, and in which you may rise: this is how he gained his great name in the late war. He had been away from his command on some business at head-quarters, and was riding back to it as fast as he could when he met his men flying before the rebels, who had surprised and routed them in his absence. He called them to halt, learned how matters stood, spoke brave words of reproof and encouragement to them, re-formed them, and led them against the enemy, who in turn were defeated and driven back, and so he turned a miserable defeat into a glorious victory—the great and important victory of Winchester. Now I want you, boys, to think of this when you see General Phil. Sheridan, and to think that though you may have for a time been defeated and driven back in the path of true and useful life’s work, yet it is in the power of any

or all of you to turn a defeat into a glorious victory."

It was a sight to see this man with simple goodness and faith and love speaking to those poor boys in this way ; the radiance of his face, and the tenderness as of a father yearning over an erring son, and these poor hard faces thawing wonderingly at the sound of such words of hope—surely a Gospel in its way to them. Judge Russell is a man in high position. It was he who welcomed Charles Dickens to Boston, when he had a civic reception from the Boston people ; and I am sure it was a hearty welcome he gave him ; but not surely more hearty than the welcome he was willing to give to the boys who were coming back to ordered and virtuous ways. I was told that this institution is the joy of his heart, and that he works for it and in it as his life's work. He had learned to think of and care for these boys when he was sitting on the bench as their judge. He has now retired from that function to another government office ; and he besides exercises this noble volunteer one. The boys go into the merchant service mostly, and I was told make excellent sailors, having, while on board, several able-bodied seamen constantly drilling them in ship's work.

Boston is in the old settled part of the States. Chicago belongs to the quite new regions of the great West. I spent little time in that city ; and,

to say the truth, was so distressed by the heat, choked and blinded with the dust, and annoyed by the snarling hum of the mosquito, that my frame of mind was not favourable to much study of the place. There seemed a large German population there dealing in ready-made clothes, tobacco, and lager beer. Besides there are a good many Irish. I saw gigantic placards on the walls, summoning Fenian meetings for the overthrow of England. I was told there was also a considerable Scotch population, for which I hope the Chicago people are duly thankful. The Sunday I spent there showed me that Scotch ideas of Sabbath were not by any means all-prevailing there. I attended service at the bishop's church, where was a large and attentive audience. I dined with a friend in the afternoon, and met a general in the late war, who was partner in the principal book-selling house in the city. My friend drove me in the evening round the suburbs—Chicago seemed to me to be mostly made up of suburbs—and showed me the great Douglas College of which I have already spoken.

But Chicago was not my rest. I was bound for the great prairie of Illinois, of which Chicago is the great market town. You remember that Illinois is the birth state of Abraham Lincoln, who, from what I saw, was a typical man of the best class that it produces—shrewd, thoughtful, public spirited, patriotic in the best sense. They are very proud of

him, and tell many stories of his quaint sayings. One was quite new to me, and very characteristic of his ready wit and self-possession. When he was contesting the State for the office of Senator against Judge Douglas, they had both to make their speeches on the hustings. Douglas had the bad taste to make some allusions to Lincoln's origin, and said he had remembered him when he was serving liquor behind a bar. When Lincoln rose to reply there was a quiet smile on his face. He turned to Douglas and congratulated him on the accuracy of his memory. He *was* born very poor, and when quite a young man had, as the judge said, for a short time earned his living in that way, but Judge Douglas had forgotten one half of the story. "When I was serving out liquor on one side of the bar the Judge was not seldom on the other side drinking it." This stroke, said my informant, *quite killed the Douglas*.

I spent a week with a farmer in the Prairie about 100 miles beyond Chicago. The country is thinly peopled, many of the farms being quite recently made, and considerable portions not under cultivation, or used only for feeding cattle. My host drove me a good deal about, and I visited many of the farmers, and after their primitive hospitable manner took such meals as happened to be going, dinner at twelve or one, tea about six.

One was struck with the completeness with

which they carried the idea of education with them into those new settlements, and how thoroughly the States have made provision for the educational wants of the people. At every two miles or so was built a substantial wooden school-house. Nearly all the houses are made of wood, a brick house being quite a mark of distinction. The land is marked out into sections of about six miles square, each such section being a township, having its own municipal government. The farms ranged from 80 to 600 acres in the part I was. Of course there are in other parts much larger farms. The inhabitants there were to a considerable extent Scotch, but there were many Yankees from New England and some North of Ireland Irish. There was a French colony not far off and a Dutch or German one. The people I saw were either Yankees or Scotch, and wonderfully intelligent people they were. A New Englander I met talked to me about Ruskin, Carlyle, Buckle on Civilization, Lecky on Rationalism, and other modern books and writers, with thorough intelligence. He thought Carlyle must have gone somewhat mad to have written such an article as "Shooting Niagara," which had recently appeared, and in reply to some doubt I expressed as to the stability of the country, answered "What is to disturb us now slavery is gone?" I said, "I do not see what is to hold you together, you can have no sense of a common

national life with all this conglomeration of foreign elements. The only common feeling I perceive is a common hatred to England." "We don't hate England, we were only hurt and astonished at the part you took, and that will pass away; we are not an unforgiving people. And as for our stability, that is secured by the fact that no political change could possibly better any man's condition. Every man is at once a king, and subject to no other man, but only to the law which we all reverence and obey." This man was notable for intelligence in the district, was said to be not quite orthodox in his religious opinions, but he subscribed to their common church, and once when I met him was on his way with a basket of apples as a present to the minister. In every house I visited there was a good library, and books like Macaulay's *England*, and Hallam's works were not unfrequent. Pianos, or some instrument of the organ kind on a small scale, were in many houses, with Beethoven's music lying on the top. I could not induce any of the daughters of the house to play to me, as in their ignorance they thought I should be a critical judge of music. But they cooked excellent chops, or ham and eggs, or grilled chicken, and were attentive and hospitable ladies of the house when they took their seats at the head of the table. To my mind they were very pleasant, well-bred, modest ladies, even though they cooked the simple meal with their own

hands. In the *Odyssey*, Homer tells how Ulysses, when bathing in a river on some strange island, had to run and hide himself, seeing the daughters of the king coming down with baskets of clothes on their heads to wash them in the stream. Why should not the daughters of an American gentleman farmer do the same. Shall I shock my fair friends who honour me with their presence that it might do them all good to take a hand now and then in the wash tub or at the sauce-pan. Unquestionably, I think the general intelligence of these simple men and maidens was up to the level of our ordinary middle class. I did not see any of the schools at work, for it was harvest time and their vacation, but judging from results it cannot be a bad education.

I went to the church on Sunday. It was Presbyterian ; the one in the next parish was Methodist I was told, but every one went to the nearest church with little reference to his private beliefs. It was a beautiful day when my host drove me with his family along the noiseless earth-road through the great still Prairie, with only an occasional clump of trees, or a wooden frame house, or a strip of green osage orange hedge marking but scarce breaking the wide stretch of the level horizon. Thousands of gay butterflies or winged crickets flitting about in ceaseless, noiseless motion, the myriad chirping of crickets in the long grass, so innumerable and

ceaseless that it was blended into one indistinguishable tinkle, as if fairy bells were hung on each twig of the Prairie weed. "On to God's house the people pressed," to worship in their simple primitive way. When we reached the church, really rather a pretty wooden structure with high pitched roof and a little belfry at one end, there were some two or three hundred persons old and young clustered in knots on the space in front. The horses in their waggons or *buggies* were tied to the fences about. Everything had that serene, quiet look that the blessed Sabbath feeling gives. When we were all seated in church it got whispered about that the minister had been taken suddenly ill, and could not preach or conduct the service. Shortly, a decent, intelligent middle-aged farmer, a ruling elder I suppose, got up and told us that it was so. He suggested that since they were there it would be a pity to separate without worship, and called on "brother so-and-so" to open with a prayer, which of course was extempore. Then they had a hymn and a chapter of the bible was read, and then they had three or four similar prayers from different members of the congregation, alternating with hymns and reading of the bible. The prayers were devout, earnest, sensible, and without rant or extravagance, such as often characterizes extempore prayers. I think the whole did not last more than an hour, and the congregation broke up to



cluster for a time in little knots, and tell or hear about the minister's illness, and other matters. A little enclosure, more carefully railed in than the ordinary farm fences are, stood a little way off and the gleaming white stones indicated that here too was the common note of humanity. A woman stole across the road, and passed in through the little swing gate, and reaching a small grave bent her face over it with that look that one has seen on mother's faces before. The community was growing up with its memories as well as with its hopes, with its sorrows as with its joys.

I think it probable that this was a favourable specimen of the new life in the great West, beyond the average. Still it was there, and I cannot doubt that there were many like it elsewhere. A marked feature certainly was the care almost all the men had that their community should improve and carry on its mental and moral and religious culture. *The good of the community* and its improvement was often on their lips and I feel sure also in their hearts.

In New York I went to one of the Public Schools, which are supported by the State, and in which any child can receive gratuitously an education in English, writing, arithmetic, and some branches of mathematics, history, geography, classics, and foreign languages. Attendance is not made compulsory by the State; but I understood that, in

most classes and districts, it is practically compulsory by the habits and opinion of society. I had no opportunity of judging of the thoroughness of the education given in these schools. An intimate friend of my own, an Oxford man, whose tone of mind would lead him to be rather exacting as regards accuracy and soundness, but whose sympathies with America and her institutions would also make him a not unfairly severe judge, more recently than myself visited and very carefully examined a good many of these schools. His opinion was, that in these respects of minute soundness, the teaching was not very high; at the same time, he thought it calculated to rouse general intelligence and activity of mind. Much of it is oral, questions and answers, and there is a good deal of attention paid to elocution and learning pieces by heart. My own impression coincided with his, so far as my experience went. The opening prayer was over and a hymn was being sung when I went into the large assembling room. The principal, to whom I was introduced by an intelligent young man of twenty-two, who had been an old pupil, and who did great credit to his training, shook hands with me after the singing was over and offered to show me all I cared to see. He went on with his ordinary work, calling up some lads who had to read pieces of their own composition, which they did with modesty and vivacity. Then he gave some

general instructions about school work, after which they were marched off in classes to the several class-rooms in regular succession and in military style, to the sound of a piano played by a young lady. Several of the teachers were ladies, and statistics show that lady teachers are extensively employed for the younger boys throughout the States. I heard one lady examine her class in history, and, as far as I could judge, she did it carefully, and the boys answered on the whole intelligently. I visited several of the class-rooms, heard examinations in English language—the derivation of words—and in geometry. The whole demeanour of the boys was admirable. I saw neither moodiness nor frivolity; they, as a rule, seemed intent on their work, and cheerful at it. The principal impressed me as a man of ability and earnestness. He had 1000 boys under him. I had seen them all assembled with their teachers in the large room, and seen them dispersed to their several class-rooms in that rhythmic order. There seemed perfect regularity in all their operations. The principal told me that he had not employed corporeal punishment for four years. He was at perfect liberty to do so, but found he got on better without it. If a boy was very troublesome or disobedient, so that reprimand was insufficient, he was sent home to his parents, with an intimation that as soon as they had taught him to obey and behave,

they would take him back. This would answer to rustication in our universities. It was a great terror to the boys, and the mere threat would awe the most turbulent. Expulsion was possible, but hardly ever needed. A monthly report is sent home, signed by the parent, and returned to the master, who preserves it. This is called the boy's *Record*. A boy's future career may be materially influenced by his *Record*. The Americans are extremely sensitive as to character, and it is one of our popular delusions that a disreputable man may go from England and get into any society he chooses in New York. Nothing can be more contrary to fact. A notorious English barrister, who was expelled from our bar, went to New York, and did gain admittance at their bar, was, I remember, reported by our veracious "own correspondents" to be starring it in the best New York circles. I had the curiosity to ask about him, and was told on different and trustworthy authorities, that his admission had been obtained in ignorance of the real circumstances, that having done no overt act since he was still on the roll, but he was admitted to no decent society.

Indeed, the social life and habits of the people, so far as a rather intimate and various experience enabled me to form an opinion, are as high in moral tone, and as punctilious in the proprieties and amenities, as our own are. Of course there are

rowdies and fast people ; but, taking all things into account, I should think not more numerous nor prominent than here. I believe that, socially, they are not, as a whole, inferior to ourselves. The family life seemed to me quiet, orderly, and temperate, and the stories I have heard of the forwardness of the children were not borne out in a single instance in my experience. I heard young men of sixteen and seventeen address their fathers as Sir, an old-fashioned custom I have only occasionally known in England, which, I confess, is as pleasant to me as, shall I say, old Port or old Madeira. The wine and the feeling may be no better than other modes or vintages, but the flavour is pleasant to one's taste and palate. I was an inmate in houses where my bed-room was a small closet, where I could certainly not have indulged in the pastime of swinging cats had my tastes lain in that direction, and, on the other hand, in houses where a magnificent suite of apartments, bed-room, sitting-room, and bath-room, were placed at my service ; and I stayed at houses in various grades between. As regards the ordinary demeanour of parents and children, I should not have known that I was out of England.

With regard to Political Institutions, I will only say this : that in no class and in no political party did I meet with a single person who was, not merely not discontented with, but who was not proud of

their form of government. I met bishops of the Episcopal Church, Chancellors and other high officers in the Universities, senators, generals, tradesmen, and farmers, men whose origin was from the working classes at home, and men who could trace their descent, through judges who had been appointed by the English Crown, up to Elizabethan courtiers, and who were not a little proud of this descent ; but I found no one who did not at once, and strongly, express his confidence in the soundness of Republican Government, and its ultimate power to carry their nation to great and permanent well-being. I found many who echoed my expressions of satisfaction with the monarchical and aristocratic element in our constitution, as best fitting our country. I met with several who expressed great doubts as to the wisdom of the rapid progress towards democracy recently made among ourselves by a swiftly and highly educated Tory Government. But I met none of the democratic, any more than of the republican, party who were dissatisfied with their own. Nor do I think they have any need. God fulfils himself in many ways, and God's creature and image, man, may do the same. In details, there as here, much improvement is desirable and possible.

One of the worst features there is, that so many of the executive, fiscal and even judicial offices, are dependent on political fluctuations. In many of

the States the judges, and in all, post-office officials, go out and come in with ascendancy or fall of political parties. This is a great evil, and leads to frightful corruption. But this, like the mystery of our own dockyards, and our shameless bribery at elections, is no essential part of the constitution of the country, and both, we may hope, will yet be remedied. Judges of the Supreme Court of the United States, and judges in some of the individual States, are, as they all should be, for life.

I cannot but feel that you will naturally, and perhaps with some justice, think that I have been giving you almost entirely the brightest side of the Yankee character. I will only claim that I have given you my own experience. There were two very justifiable reasons why I should dwell on the bright side. The first is, that it was the side which I saw most of. The other reason for my dwelling on the sunlit side of the Yankee is that so enormous, and as I think utterly disproportionate, an amount of the attention of England has been directed to the black and midnight side. Yankee sharpness, Yankee corruption, Yankee bluster, in business, in politics, in journalism, are undoubted facts—no American citizen of intelligence or of integrity would think of denying that these things exist in their country. But is there no Yankee uprightness in commerce or politics, no wise, candid speech in their Congress, Senate, or Press concerning England

and other countries? After the commercial disclosures of the last two years is our trade so free from sharpness that we can afford to cast stones at our erring kinsmen? and as regards political corruption even in high places; it is not much more than a century since an English minister was able to say that he carried the House of Commons in his pocket; and though assuredly I believe that now no minister could with justice, and in any such sense, say that he carried one of its least members in the degrading receptacle, yet surely no man can be so shameless as not to blush at political corruptions among ourselves in other regions and in other aspects. Our Press! has it been moderate? was it in the least degree calm and discriminating during the four years of that great and momentous struggle? I venture to say that no more disastrous stream of untrue, unwise, unkind speech ever issued from English pen or English press—hardly even from the *New York Herald*, or the *Irish Nation*. We have a Free Press, and God forbid that we should ever want it. I believe it to be not merely the privilege, but more emphatically the duty, of all men to speak the truth freely, aye even what they believe the truth. Freedom is the only atmosphere in which noble words can be spoken or noble deeds done. I cannot exaggerate my sense of the unspeakable worth and sacredness of human freedom. But the deeper I feel its value the deeper I feel the



enormous responsibility it involves. And he who uses his liberty of speech in a light or in a reckless mood is guilty of sin which may be called sacrilege. The first condition of any speech whatever is that a man should have carefully considered the truth of what he affirms ; that he should have taken adequate pains to understand the facts, or the person, or the nation that he speaks about. I am not here to discuss Alabama claims or questions about our recognition of the South. They are out of my knowledge, and following my own rule I refrain from speaking about them. But I do know—any man can easily learn—about that great Northern party and its cause in the late struggle, and I am convinced that we—that is the great bulk of our middle and upper classes—grievously misunderstood it, and had not taken pains to understand it. The consequence was that our Press poured out day by day and week by week words that have rankled in the hearts of the Americans, and begot an alienation, the constant evidence of which while I was there made my heart ache. I think they are in a bad mood towards us—perhaps not, in the majority, of distinct hatred, but of irritation for our prevalent tone during their trouble, and consequent alienation of heart,—that is too likely to make any slightest difficulty issue in insane strife. It is with no desire to speak bitter words to any of my friends or fellow-countrymen that I now point out our past

errors ; but solely with the desire that a right understanding should exist between the two greatest and noblest peoples on the globe, and that seeing each other truly, they should be, as they ought to be, fellow-workers in the great cause of human progress and Christian civilization. It unfortunately happened that during the late war the party—the South—whom we chose to side with, and pet and admire and wish success to, was the very party which before the war was always seeking to stir up ill-feeling towards England, and indeed had been in past wars our bitterest enemies. The party whom we chose to abuse and wished to fail, the North, was and always had been our closest friends.

A passage which I accidentally lighted on in the Annual Register of 1812 will show how true this is. Boston represented broadly the North ; Baltimore, the capital of “My Maryland” of the sentimental song, broadly the South in the late struggle. The stupid and resultless war of 1812-14, I believe, is generally admitted to have been mainly of American seeking. We were in the middle of our European war with France, and they took advantage of it. But, as you know, there always has been much antagonism between North and South in America, one party or the other being uppermost. The party which was then in power was to blame : which was it ? Listen to the mood of the two great

centres then, on the declaration of that war with England.

“At Boston on the day of the declaration of war with England all the ships in the port displayed flags half mast high, the usual token of mourning; and a town meeting was held in that city in which a number of resolutions were passed, stigmatizing the war as unnecessary and ruinous, and leading to a connexion with France destructive to American liberty and independence.

“Very different was the popular sentiment in the Southern states, where swarms of privateers were preparing to reap the expected harvest of prizes among the West India Islands. Of the towns in this interest Baltimore stood foremost in violence and outrage.”

The relative sentiment of the North and South towards England, has always been the same. New England, which was the back-bone of the Northern party, has beyond all question ever been the centre of the highest culture, and substantially of the highest moral tone in the great Republic. The great West, which was peopled to a large extent by Yankees, with the addition of many of the best emigrants from England and Scotland, was with New England in forming the Republican party, which was generally anti-slavery and, in its advanced members, abolitionist. By far the majority of the Republican party were of the best old blood—

Yankee blood, and as a rule loved England, with all its faults, as Mr. Sumner said to me. The Southern slaveholder was the back-bone of the democratic party; to him was joined that portion of the New Yorkers who pandered to the South for the sake of trade, and the Irish almost to a man. Alas for the feeling of the Irish towards England; when and how will that grievous hurt be healed? But there can be no doubt that the sons of those who sent out privateers in the war of 1812 formed with the Irish an unholy alliance of hatred to England and to the Northern Yankee at once. Need I dwell on the lesson which these facts teach us. When Southern successes and northern disasters were dwelt on with delight and ecstasy by our Press day after day, can we wonder that our old friends passed from astonishment and pain to aversion and even hatred. The result is—and it is not less dangerous to America than to ourselves,—we have alienated the North and by no means conciliated the South, certainly not the Irish, as witness the insane Fenian organization. Can we yet learn? or learning, can we do anything to repair our past error? The first thing seems to me to be to *see* it.

It is a common accusation brought against those who point out our national errors in dealing with other countries, and especially with America, that

they are un-English and that they care more for other countries than their own. But surely it is not an unpatriotic aim to seek that our country, its people, its press, its government, should be just in its judgments of other peoples, wise in its action towards them, should constantly exhibit that right-cousness, fairness, candour, on which alone true national dignity can stand firmly and unmoved. I yield to no man in my love and admiration for this great British Empire, in my sympathy with its soul-stirring memories of great men and great deeds, its vast inheritance in Literature, in Arts, in Science, in political and spiritual freedom. I do not forget that great men have been among us—greater none. I do not forget that

“It is the land which freemen till,  
Which sober-suited Freedom chose—  
A land where, girt by friends or foes,  
A man may speak the thing he will”—

as I am doing now.

But, indeed, it is no lack of patriotism that leads me to remind myself and my countrymen of the bad habit we have of looking down on other peoples, and not fairly looking at them, and of the evil results that the consequent misunderstanding of them leads to. I am afraid it is an old failing and venerable; but it is a failing none the less, and our wisest have always felt it so. Shakspeare, in

the Merchant of Venice, makes the beautiful and wise Italian Portia, ask her maid, Nerissa, to recount all her suitors, that she may say how she feels affected towards them. Nerissa, among others, puts this question—

“What say you, then, to Falconbridge, the young baron of England?”

Portia answers—

“You know I say nothing to him ; for he understands not me, nor I him.”

Falconbridge, I fear, is too faithful a type of a very prevalent form of English character along the line of its history. Like him, we often ape the follies of foreigners without any true instinct that will lead us to understand their character or win what is fairest and best in them, and so we get misunderstood in turn. We do not learn to understand their history, their institutions, their social life, or even their language, and our self-satisfied ignorance has made us often absurd, even hateful, in their eyes. Was not this the case for long years with regard to the French, for instance. The baneful effect has not seldom been felt, its absurd aspect oftener. “What silly people those Frenchmen are,” said the English sailor ; “they actually call a cabbage a shoe.” He could not understand that the succulent vegetable might be as pleasant to the

Frenchman's palate and as wholesome to his stomach under the name *chou*, as it was to himself under the name cabbage. The rose by any other name could not smell as sweet nor the cabbage taste as pleasant.

Our prejudiced talk mattered less with the French, as they had a reciprocal contempt for us, and the thick veil of an alien tongue hung between them and us. But, with the American, it has been, and will be different. With our blood they inherit our language, the veil of a different language through which adverse feeling may be dimmed, does not exist with them. A young English country gentleman, who was staying in a Paris Hotel, greeted a more learned friend, who called on him, thus, "Delighted to see you, Tom! but do please swear in French at that fellow there," pointing to a waiter who was standing before him with a look of mute, half amused astonishment, not understanding a word of the torrent of English oaths he was pouring out. But we don't need to swear at our American cousin in any but plain English to produce whatever effect our spoken wrath is fitted to bring about.

But the language of obloquy is not the only language possible between us. They read our English Bible, with its Gospel of peace and purity, of righteousness and love. Our Shakspeare, our

Milton, our Hooker, our Bacon, are theirs ; our glorious inheritance of freedom hardly won is theirs —nothing can be gained for either by success in any possible quarrel. Why, in the name of common sense and common interest, should we strive, seeing we are brethren? I will do my countrymen the justice to say that I do not think that there is any sane Englishman who can think of war between the two countries but with loathing and horror. I am sorry to say that I fear there are some Americans neither Irishmen nor Southerners, who have not quite the same feeling, and to whom the gratification of humbling England would outweigh the disaster that war would certainly be to them not much less than to us.

It would be unjust and ungenerous in Englishmen not to recognize the promptitude with which the American Government put down the overt acts of the Fenian movement on Canada. But at the same time, one cannot be blind to the fact that a considerable portion of both the people and the press, even of that section that, as we might hope, should know better, more or less encourage or wink at that aimless yet dangerous organization, dangerous not less to the Americans than to ourselves. To encourage, even by silence, the concretion of a foolish race feeling, antagonistic not merely to England, but to the English race, in



their country, seems to me in the highest degree unwise and impolitic. That this has been done I fear must be admitted as certain. That considerations of party politics may have something to do with it is probably true, but cannot be held to excuse the fact. But that some bitterness towards England aided in the feeling I fear is also true, and though intelligible, is neither politic nor magnanimous, in a great, powerful, self-reliant people. But I have a deep conviction that there is, on both sides of the Atlantic, a large body of thoughtful, far-seeing men—and in neither country the least earnest in their patriotism—who will work and pray, by pen and tongue and act, for peace between these two great countries, peace based neither on servile flattery nor cowardly subservience, but on manly recognition of each other's worth and not less manly tolerance of each other's failings. And my hope is deep that their action, and speech, and prayer will prevail.

It surely would be terribly sad to contemplate any other issue. That two nations who should be in the van of all that tends to elevate and enoble and purify and unite mankind, the leaders of our common Christian life and civilization, should continue to gird at each other instead of joining as yoke-fellows in the work of bringing about the Golden Year:—this, the chance, surely

is enough to make a thoughtful man consider what he can do to prevent it. I wonder whether this night we have spent with the Yankees will help towards that end. At least it was my aim that it should do some little stroke in that direction. It may not be the highest ambition possible to man, but I do greatly yearn after the blessing of the peace maker.

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